

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 54

### SECRET SERVICE

Frank Tousey's answer to Nick Carter Weekly. Began January 28, 1899, and lasted until May 1925 with the issue of No. 1374. The original size was 8x11, changed to 7x9½ with No. 1113. The last original story was No. 726 issued December 20, 1912, from then on all stories were reprints of the earlier issues. The series featured the detective adventures of the Bradys.



## The Upton Sinclair Dime Novels

By Ronald Gottesman

(Indiana University, Lilly Library)

To unravel completely Sinclair's tangled career as a half-dime novelist would require the dexterity and stamina of Frank Merriwell as well as the ingenuity and intuition of Nick Carter. Sinclair is himself understandably uncertain about the details of his first steady—and fairly lucrative—experience as a salaried writer. Moreover, the records of Street & Smith for this period are unavailable (though since Sinclair wrote under pseudonyms—at least one of which was shared with another man—it is not at all certain that such records would provide definitive evidence). And although every effort has been made to recover the actual publications to which Sinclair may have contributed, it has not been possible to examine every copy of every publication in this category. Again, even if it had been possible to do so, the largely anonymous style of these juvenile writings makes identification on stylistic grounds uncertain at best. (Note 1.)

What is offered, then, does not pretend to be a definitive listing of Sinclair's half-dime novel writings or a full account of a busy and important two years of his life. On the other hand, the following facts sum up what is now definitely known about Sinclair's career as a hack writer and provide at least the guidelines for a full and indisputable listing of his work in this area.

Sinclair graduated from C. C. N. Y. in June of 1897, though he chose to receive his degree through the mail rather than attend the commencement exercises. He apparently spent a short time in the Thousand Islands area of

the St. Lawrence River before he returned to New York to seek means to pay for a year of graduate study in literature and philosophy he wished to have before settling down to prepare for a career in law. In New York, Sinclair renewed his acquaintance with Henry Harrison Lewis, an editor with Street & Smith who had encouraged him in his even earlier attempts to earn his living as a writer. At this time—probably the second week in June 1897—Street & Smith was just starting a new series in its juvenile line. The gaudy colored publication was to be called "The Army and Navy Weekly," "a weekly publication for our boys." Sinclair was offered the job of writing up the adventures of Mark Mallory, a cadet at West Point, under the pseudonym of Lieutenant Frederick Garrison. After spending a few days at the academy gathering information on life at West Point, Sinclair returned and "produced a manuscript of some twenty-five or thirty thousand words, a rollicking tale of a group of 'candidates' who made their appearance at the academy to start their military career." (Note 2.) Only two years earlier he had worn short pants; now he was launched on a full-time literary career.

Sinclair continued to write the Mark Mallory stories through the summer and fall into the winter, even though he had begun his experiment with graduate education as a "special student" at Columbia in the Fall of the year. In number 31 of the Army and Navy Weekly (15 Jan. 1898) appeared an announcement that number 34 would have "new features, new

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changes," and this series underwent change in title and cover design—though not much else—after number 33 was issued on 29 Jan. 1898. Sinclair continued to write the Mark Mallory stories in this new Half-Holiday series until it ended with number 28 on 13 Aug. 1898.

For some time a Clif Faraday story written by Henry H. Lewis, the Street & Smith editor who had hired Sinclair, continued to accompany a Mark Mallory story in each issue of Half-Holiday as it had in Army and Navy Weekly. After No. 15 (14 May 1898), however, the Clif Faraday story did not appear in Half-Holiday. Since the destruction of the Maine on 15 Feb. 1898, the Spanish-American war had been threatening to break out, and on the 25th of April, the United States declared that a state of war had existed retroactive to 21 April. The rush of volunteers for this most popular war was great, and it surprised no one to find that Clif had been called to active duty. Appropriately enough, Clif moved out of his half-Holiday format into the colorful and patriotic True Blue, a brand new weekly "devoted to the stirring adventures of our boys in blue." For some 28 issues, from 14 May 1898 to 19 Nov. 1898, Clif Faraday served and saved his country with heroic distinction. Although Clif did return to Annapolis with No. 29 (26 Nov. 1898) and continued his exploits through No. 50 (22 April 1899)—when this series apparently died—Sinclair can probably be credited only with Nos. 1-28.

Perhaps because he was too young—he was only a plebe—Mark Mallory did not enter the Spanish-American War directly. Not wishing to leave our forces shorthanded, Street & Smith swiftly sent Hal Maynard, a marine, to Cuba in another new series, Starry Flag Weekly, which began publication on 4 May 1898 and, after having become a monthly, ceased publication with No. 20 (1 Feb. 1899). The author of most of the titles in this series was Douglas Wells, a pseudonym Sinclair claims never to have used

though he has stated that he wrote some numbers in the Starry Flag Weekly. (Note 3.)

Apparently the war adventures of Clif Faraday were unusually hearty fare for a war-hungry juvenile population. In any case, the Clif Faraday stories from True Blue were reprinted in yet another Street & Smith venture, The Columbia Library, a series which ran to 44 numbers, between 1 Sept. 1898 and 1 Feb. 1903. With very minor changes most of the Ensign Clarke Fitch (Upton Sinclair) series of Clif Faraday stories from True Blue was reprinted in Nos. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11-13 of Columbia Library, a thick paper-covered book similar to present day inexpensive paperbacks. In addition to these reprints, there is at least one other novelette credited to Ensign Clarke Fitch, "The Soldier Monk," which was probably written by Sinclair especially for the series.

To further complicate matters, the Faraday stories which originally appeared in True Blue and were reprinted in the Columbia Library, were reprinted three more times in similar Street & Smith series—in Bound to Win Library, in Medal Library, and in Round the World Library. Bound to Win began on 7 Feb. 1903—less than a week after Columbia Library stopped—and, in similar format, continued for 167 numbers until Feb. of 1907. The Medal Library, again in paperback book format, had a long life; it survived from 28 Jan. 1899 until 8 May 1917 and ran to 858 numbers, at least eight of which reincarnated Clif Faraday. A few years after the Medal Library ceased publication, the Round the World Library began. It ran from Jan. 1925 to Dec. 1931 in 183 numbers. By this time the principle of interchangeable parts had clearly been discovered, for in reprinting the Clif Faraday adventures this time, Street & Smith selected for number 115 of Round the World, numbers 4-6 and 26 and 28 of True Blue and renamed the hero Gil Galloway and the author Com. Luther G. Brownell.

Mark Mallory, undoubtedly because



his academy capers lacked the universal appeal of a hero under fire, seems to have been made of less durable stuff. He reappeared in only two Street & Smith publications, *Brave and Bold*, which ran for 429 issues, from 27 Dec. 1902 to 11 March 1911, and *Boys of America*, which survived from 5 Oct. 1901 to 17 Oct. 1903, a total of 107 issues. The first seven numbers of *Army and Navy Weekly* were reprinted as No. 195 of *Brave and Bold* and as numbers 63-69 of *Boys of America*. Numbers 556, 568 and 579 of *Medal Library* are also believed to contain reprints of Mark Mallory's West Point adventures from *Army and Navy Weekly*, and *Half-Holiday*, but these numbers were not available for examination.

The last reprinting of the Clif Faraday and Mark Mallory stories saw them achieve the more solid and permanent form of hardcover books. These books were published by the David McKay Company of Philadelphia, apparently in 1903 and 1904, as part of a series of juveniles with the general title "The Boys' Own Library." In this series—"the cream of juvenile fiction"—Mark Mallory and Clif Faraday each formed a five volume segment, with the following titles:

Lt. Frederick Garrison (Mark Mallory Stories):

1. Off for West Point
2. A Cadet's Honor
3. On Guard
4. The West Point Treasure
5. The West Point Rivals

Ensign Clarke Fitch (Clif Faraday stories):

1. Bound for Annapolis
2. Clif, the Naval Cadet
3. Cruise of the Training Ship
4. From Port to Port
5. A Strange Cruise

Altogether this nickel novel career is a remarkable and a remarkably complex chapter in Sinclair's life. It had, as Sinclair himself realized, an important effect on his writing habits ("Autobiography"; p. 51), but to dismiss this experience as lightly as Sinclair does is to underestimate the

significance of this crucial experience to his conception of the possibilities of fiction and the practice of its techniques. The biographer will ignore the psychically revealing aspects of this fiction to the detriment of his portrait. Although this is not the place to pursue such matters, perhaps that which follows will help to make the Protean careers of Mark Mallory and Clif Faraday clearer.

To summarize: Sinclair initially wrote two series of stories (Mallory and Faraday) under two pseudonyms (Garrison and Fitch) which were originally published in three (probably four) different titles (*Army and Navy Weekly*, *Half-Holiday*, *True Blue*, and probably, *Starry Flag Weekly*); in addition he wrote under one of the pseudonyms (Fitch) an undetermined number of novelettes for a still different series (Columbia). With the exception of a part of the Columbia Library material, portions of the original material were republished with various changes in at least six other series titles (*Medal Library*, *Boys of America*, *Brave and Bold*, *Bound to Win*, *Round the World*, and *McKay's Boys' Own Library*.)

Between 19 June 1897 and 19 Nov. 1898 Sinclair turned out 61 Mark Mallory stories of 10-12 pp., and 28 Clif Faraday stories of 30-32 pp. This during an eighteen month period—most of it coinciding with his full-time graduate study at Columbia University—Sinclair turned out some 1500 pages of published material for *Army and Navy Weekly*, *Half-Holiday*, and *True Blue*, totalling approximately 1,275,000 words. If not the equivalent of the complete works of Sir Walter Scott, as Sinclair claims, it is an impressive record for a young man barely out of his teens. And when one considers that for part of this time Sinclair was also writing a novelette of 30-40,000 words for the Columbia Library series, the output is staggering. It is this enormous capacity for work which characterizes Sinclair's entire career, the capacity which later led Sinclair Lewis to be astounded by his



(Sinclair's) ability to get so much done with only twenty-four hours a day to do it in!"

Note 1. Without the patient help of Edward T. LeBlanc, Ralph P. Smith, Ralph Adimari, Perry E. Gianakos and J. Edward Leithead, the record of Sinclair's labors in the "fiction factory" would have remained infinitely less clear. See especially, Ralph Adimari, "Upton Sinclair: Last of the Dime Novels," "Dime Novel Roundup," Vol. XXIV, nos. 6-7 (15 June and 15 July 1956), pp. 42-44; 51-52.

Mr. Sinclair examined every one of the scores of these publications which were sent to him. Usually he was confident about his authorship, but not always.

Note 2. Upton Sinclair, "The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair" (New York, 1962), p. 49.

Note 3. The Starry Flag Weekly is one of the rarest of the half-dime novels. Numbers 1-18 were written by Douglas Wells; numbers 19 and 20 by Frederick Garrison. Unfortunately

copies were not available for examination by either Mr. Sinclair or me. It is quite possible, nonetheless, that Sinclair did write the two Starry Flag Weeklys bearing the name Lt. Frederick Garrison. Indeed, it seems especially likely that Sinclair did write numbers 19 and 20 since these are the only two in the series which (apparently) have West Point as their locus of action. The titles of these two are: #19, "Hal Maynard at West Point; or, the New Member of the Seven Devils" (1 Jan. 1899); #20, "Scrap Powers in trouble; or, the Seven Devils and the Green Goods Man" (1 Feb. 1899). (Ed. Note. These are actually reprints of Mark Mallory stories from Army and Navy Weekly with the name changed.)

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Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup, Nos. 1 to 237 for sale. Some reprints, all interesting, 12 for \$1.00 or all 237 numbers for \$18.00 postpaid.

**Ralph F. Cummings**

161 Pleasant St., So. Grafton, Mass.

### A CHECK LIST OF GEORGE MUNRO PUBLICATIONS

1. MUNRO'S TEN CENT NOVELS. 354 issues. November 11, 1863, to August, 1877. Dime Novels in the true sense of the word.
2. MUNRO'S TEN CENT STORIES. 1 issue. November 1863.
3. FIRESIDE COMPANION. At least 1683 issues, probably more. November 6, 1868, to January 27, 1900. Story Paper featuring the Old Sleuth stories in serial form as well as stories of popular contemporary authors.
4. MUNRO'S ILLUSTRATED SERIES. 1 issue. August 1872.
5. MUNRO'S GIRLS AND BOYS OF AMERICA. At least 180 issues, possibly more. October 4, 1873, to April 1877. Story paper containing serials for youngsters.
6. MUNRO'S DIALOGUES. 4 issues. 1875 to 1876.
7. MUNRO'S SPEAKERS. 3 issues. 1875 to 1876.
8. MUNRO'S BACKWOODS SERIES. 1 issue. 1876?
9. SEASIDE LIBRARY. At least 2054 issues. June 1877 to Feb. 1886. Munro's biggest money maker. Contained most of the stories of all the popular authors of the day.
10. LEISURE HOUR LIBRARY. 7 issues. March 1882.
11. SEASIDE LIBRARY (POCKET EDITION). 2393 issues. July 1883 to Sept. 1905. A reissue of the stories appearing in the earlier Seaside Library with additions.
12. SEASIDE LIBRARY (25c EDITION). 400 issues. 1884 to 1890. More of the same but higher priced.
13. OLD SLEUTH LIBRARY. 101 issues. May 1885 to 1905. The first appear-



- ance in complete form of the famous Old Sleuth stories.
14. **MUNRO'S RAILROAD SERIES.** 1 issue. 1887. A re-issue of Munro's Backwoods Series.
  15. **LIBRARY OF AMERICAN AUTHORS.** 78 issues. October 1887 to April 1, 1899. Featured popular novels of American writers.
  16. **CALUMET SERIES.** 56 issues. July 1, 1891 to 1905. The Old Sleuth stories in pocket book form.
  17. **LAUREL LIBRARY.** 227 issues. December 1891 to 1903. Popular novelists of the day.
  18. **BOYS DASHAWAY SERIES.** 53 issues. January 1892 to July 1896. Stories taken from Munro's Girls and Boys of America plus the stories of Gustave Aimard.
  19. **PARLOR CAR SERIES.** 3 issues. October 1892 to December 1892. These were published under the company pseudonym of Parlor Car Pub. Co.
  20. **OLD SLEUTH'S OWN.** 131 issues. April 15, 1894, to March 7, 1898. A new series of stories by Halsey Page (Old Sleuth) featuring Detective and city stories.
  21. **MUNRO'S LIBRARY OF POPULAR NOVELS.** 272 issues. June 1894 to April 1899. Popular novels of the day.
  22. **MAJESTIC SERIES.** 500 issues. 1896. Popular novels of the day issued in one format.
  23. **GIANT SERIES.** 104 issues. November 1896 to 1897. Popular novels issued in large flat size format.
  24. **OLD SLEUTH SPECIAL DETECTIVE SERIES.** 17 issues, possibly more. A reprinting of Old Sleuth's Own. (Parlor Car Publishing Co.)
  25. **OLD SLEUTH STANDARD SERIES** 18 issues, possibly more. More reprintings of Old Sleuth's Own. (Parlor Car Publishing Co.)
  26. **CROWN SERIES.** 125 issues. Feb. 1898 to September 1898. Popular novels.
  27. **ROYAL SERIES.** 125 issues. Feb. 1898 to September 1898. Popular novels.
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  34. **THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEW.** July 1878 to Oct. 1883. Magazine featuring articles on the scenes of the day.
  35. **THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.** Aug. 1878 to Oct. 1883. Similar to above.
  36. **THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.** 1878 to Oct. 1883. Similar to above.
  37. **NEW YORK MONTHLY FASHION BAZAR.** 1879 to 1885 or later. Fashions of the day with one serial.
  38. **NEW YORK WEEKLY FASHION BAZAR.** 1880 to 1883.
  39. **DIE DEUTSCH LIBRARY.** 259 issues. Popular novels in the German language.

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